

## Learn Trope and Chant Torah

Taught by Ron Edelman

Tuesdays, November 4 – January 20  
(no class 11/25, 12/23, 12/30)

7:30 - 8:30 pm

Graduation will be at a Shabbat service in February.

Cost is \$36 for members,

\$72 for nonmembers

This fall, Ron Edelman will be teaching beginning Torah trope in nine one-hour sessions. You need to be able to read basic Hebrew but Hebrew comprehension is not a pre-requisite. Class size is limited so sign up early. To RSVP or for more information, please contact Melanie Kushnir (415/861-6932 x305 or mkushnir@shaarzahav.org).

## Kadimah-led Services

Saturday, November 22, 10 am

You won't want to miss this terrific opportunity to daven with the youth of our community. From the youngest members of our religious school to those b'nei mitzvah veterans, our students will be sharing their Torah with us at this special twice a year event. You will be energized and inspired. Please come and support our kids.

## Ma'ariv Minyan

CSZ now hosts the only San Francisco Reform Minyan for people who want to say Kaddish or who simply want to pray in community on a daily basis. The minyan takes place Sunday through Thursday, from 6:30 – 7:00 pm in the CSZ chapel (next to the sanctuary).

## Congregational Advance at CSZ

Saturday, November 1

10 am – 6:30 pm

Sunday, November 2

10 am – 3:30 pm

The Congregational Advance is an opportunity for you to connect with other CSZ members and explore the issues that face us as individuals and as a community.

We will start with Shabbat services on

Saturday morning and continue through Sunday afternoon with facilitated workshops, panels and small group activities, dancing, arts and crafts, poetry, visioning and eating. The Advance is free, a \$20 donation is requested to help defray costs.

For more information or to register, go to [www.evite.com/stevewsfo@hotmail.com/advance/](http://www.evite.com/stevewsfo@hotmail.com/advance/) or call the CSZ office (415/861-6932).

## Introduction to Judaism

Thursdays, November 13 - February 19

(no class meetings on 11/27, 12/25 and 1/1) 7 - 8:45 pm

Cost: \$160/members of CSZ or other UAHC-affiliated synagogues, \$240/nonmembers

Do you want to know more about Reform Judaism? Introduction to Judaism is a great opportunity for adults to learn about the beauty of Reform Judaism and Jewish life.

This course is for anyone curious about the basic principles and practices of Judaism. Register on your own or with a partner. In addition to classes, there will be a Friday night Shabbat potluck.

This class will be held at Sha'ar Zahav and is offered in conjunction with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. For more information or to register, please contact Meredith MacDonald (415/392-7080 x17 or mmacdonald@uahc.org).

## Talmud for Busy People

Fridays, October 31, November 21,

December 19

Noon – 1 pm

Flood Building Conference Room,  
870 Market Street at Powell

Have you always been interested in exploring the 'Oral Torah,' but found that because of work and personal commitments, you just don't have the time? Well don't fear; we are bringing the Talmud to you.

Join Rabbi Camille Shira Angel monthly, starting in October, for lunch and dialogue at the downtown office of CSZ member Tony Harris.

This exciting monthly opportunity will provide an introduction to the study of

Talmud from a liberal perspective. We will explore passages that deal with defining the rights of the individual, specifically focusing on the modern day ethical questions that face us as Jews.

These sessions are open to Congregation Sha'ar Zahav members and their guests. All are welcome.

If you have any questions, or to RSVP, please contact Melanie Kushnir (415/861-6932 x305 or mkushnir@shaarzahav.org). Our sincerest thanks to Tony Harris for providing this space for our monthly meetings. If you have access to a meeting space close to the financial district, please contact Melanie.





# Queer Torah Study Project

Tuesdays, October 21 to December 16  
7 - 9 pm

Cost for phase one of this course is \$36 for members, \$72 for nonmembers and \$5 for single sessions

*"If women and men feminists and lesbian people learn Torah, the very Torah that they learn will change itself."* from *Unheroic Conduct* by Daniel Boyarin

Please join CSZ in this historic opportunity to explore Torah together from a queer perspective. (For our group's purposes, we are defining "queer" as anyone who feels outside society's "normal" boundaries, not just LGBT folks. All are welcome!) The primary questions we will be asking in the Queer Torah Study Project are: How do we read the Torah as queer people? What does the Torah say to us as queer people? Is it possible to find our voice in Torah, as queer Jews?

Our project will unfold in two phases. The first phase will include nine weekly sessions, on the following dates, in which we will study the weekly parshah.

October 21	Bereshit/Genesis 1:1-6:8
October 28	Noah/Genesis 6:9-11:32
November 4	Lekh Lecha/Genesis 12:1-17:27
November 11	Vayera/Genesis 18:1-22:24
November 18	Chaye Sarah/Genesis 23:1-25:18
November 25	Toledot/Genesis 25:19-28:9
December 2	Vayetze/Genesis 28:10-32:3
December 9	Vayishlach/Genesis 32:4-36:43
December 16	Vayeshev/Genesis 37:1-40:23

During phase one, we will begin to establish ourselves as a study community. Our sessions will include small group activities, chavruta partners and creating/writing our own Torah commentaries. Weekly homework is required as part of this course. Packets of materials and suggested readings will be given out and several guest speakers from various Jewish/queer backgrounds will be joining us.

Phase two will include study time with Rabbi Benay Lappe, whose scholar-in-residence weekend at CSZ in February was the inspiration for this project. If you are queer in any sense of that word and looking for a deeper understanding of Torah, please join us for an opportunity to do tikkun olam through study, writing and community building.

## First Friday Dinner

November 7, 6:15 pm

Please join us Friday, November 7 to have dinner before Shabbat Services. It is a great way to meet others and have a relaxing dinner at the same time. (This is a no host dinner - the average cost is \$10-15.) We'll meet at 6:15 pm in front of CSZ and walk to the restaurant together. Please RSVP by calling the office (415/861-6932).

## Please Be in Touch With Me

I am eager to be in touch with all members of the CSZ family whenever there are occasions of joy or sadness in your lives. Where there is a death in the family, please call me as soon as possible. We very much want to be there with you at a time of grief.

*Rabbi Camille Shira Angel*

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## The Jewish Gaily Forward

November 2003  
Volume 27, Issue 3

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Members of the congregation receive the Forward as part of their membership. Nonmembers can receive a Forward subscription for \$36/year.

Note that articles reflect the opinions of their author and not necessarily those of the congregation or its committees.

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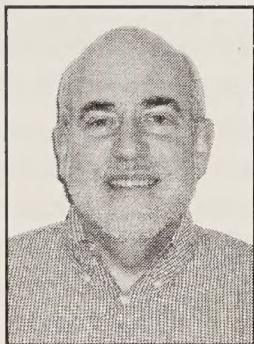
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## L'dor Vador

I saw a glimpse of the future of Sha'ar Zahav at our Simchat Torah service and celebration and it was startling in its clarity and beauty and purpose. The sanctuary was full to overflowing. The energy and intention, even before we spilled out onto the street, was palpable. The full diversity of our community, from our elders to our infants, was represented. More so than at any time I can remember, we were one congregation.



And the children! Was there once a controversy in our community about the role of children in our future? I think the children themselves, by the sheer joy and strength of their presence, have provided the answer. It is time we take this conversation to a new level.

Two days before Simchat Torah, I read an article on the opinion page of *The Wall Street Journal* by David Frum purporting to explain why gay marriage would be bad for society and why conservatives, even libertarians, should continue to oppose it, despite the recent Supreme Court decision that homosexuality can no longer be considered a crime. (And yes, I read the *WSJ*.) The core thesis of the article was that what was most damaging about the struggle for gay marriage, which the writer contends in its pure form will never happen in the U.S., was the array of near-marriage institutions, such as domestic partnerships and civil pacts, which were being created as a compromise. The author cites "empirical evidence" that these relationships are much less stable than true marriage, lasting far shorter and that the children born into them "begin life even more severely disadvantaged than they already are."

This then is the battleground. We should not be given equal rights, not even near-equal rights, because "it is bad for the children." As we think about the vision we share for CSZ in the years to come, I think an important part of our purpose must be to demonstrate not only that this view is incorrect, but to create a community where the reverse is true. A community where relationships are more stable and where children are more advantaged than in the mainstream model that is continually held up as the ideal.

How do we do this? Let me offer a few thoughts. First, we must take seriously the idea that the children in our congregation are all our children. We must continue to extend our progressive views of

the world to the ways in which we think about family. We must bring alive the concept that our children are not just the responsibility of their parents, but of a congregation full of potential teachers, mentors, friends and babysitters. Second, it is essential that we do it in a way that honors the needs and the lives of those of our members who are single or couples without children, whether by choice or circumstance. These categories still describe the majority of our members. CSZ cannot thrive if we try to move forward as a community of two worlds, the Friday night crowd and the Saturday morning crowd. We saw those two worlds come together on Simchat Torah, and we must strive to keep them together.

And we must treat with respect and support the sacred unions entered into among our members. We must be like the extended family that helps to provide the helping hand, the ear, the shoulder, the encouragement that is sometime needed as two people work to keep a union and a family together.

We should do these things because it is what our tradition teaches us is right. *L'dor vador*. We should do it so that our congregation, perhaps in a new way, continues to be a beacon to the world. And we should do it because all of our futures depend on it. The whole world is watching us. We cannot afford to fail.

## A note on some changes to CSZ Leadership:

At the October Va'ad meeting, the following changes were unanimously approved, and will be in effect through June 30, 2004:

- Karen Schiller is now Treasurer, replacing Gail Ludwig, who is stepping down after a year and a half of exemplary service.
- Drew Parker-Rose is now Recorder, replacing Karen.
- Gail will take Drew's seat on the Va'ad.

Please join me in thanking Gail, Karen and Drew, both for their past service as well as for the new roles they are taking on. I have enormous confidence in the entire CSZ leadership team, as we prepare to address some challenging issues.

After 23 (!) years of remarkable service to CSZ, Sharyn Saslafs is stepping down as co-chair of the Public Relations Committee. Words cannot adequately express the contribution that Sharyn has made to CSZ throughout our history and our gratitude for the dedication and professionalism with which she has served our community. Marc Wernick will continue on as Public Relations Chair.

## A Taste of Kabbalah

Taught by Rabbi Aaron Katz

Saturday, December 6

This day-long Shabbaton will begin following Shabbat morning services and conclude with a Havdallah service

Cost: \$18 for members, \$36 for nonmembers

Jewish mysticism, known as Kabbalah, originated hundreds of years ago. This tradition, the name of which comes from the Hebrew root meaning "to receive," has been the focus of an ever-

growing interest. Whether you have studied Jewish mysticism or are a newcomer to this fascinating world of mystical theory and practice, you will appreciate this chance to explore this "received tradition."

Rabbi Katz has taught Kabbalah at synagogues around the world, including several classes at Beth Chayim Chadashim in Los Angeles.

Pre-registration is necessary. Please RSVP to Melanie (415/861-6932 x305 or [mkushnir@shaarzahav.org](mailto:mkushnir@shaarzahav.org)) by November 21. Scholarships are available.



# Kadimah Vision Statement

by the ECE Task Force, in collaboration with the  
Children's Education Board

*The Experiment in Congregational Education (ECE) Task Force is happy to share the vision statement we've developed for Kadimah, in partnership with the Children's Education Board. We welcome your feedback about it. We are now working on turning this vision into a proposal for innovations in Kadimah over the next few years. Please let us know if you are interested in taking part. We will be sharing the results of our work with you soon.*

*Dan Bellm, Chair, ECE Task Force*

Our goal for Kadimah is to create and sustain a thriving children's education program that is thoroughly integrated with the life of the entire congregation. Our school will be a core part of a larger "congregation of learners," in which adult members – parents and non-parents alike – are partners in learning with our children. Our school will feature:

1. A curriculum that combines traditional Jewish education (Torah, ethics, ritual, Hebrew, history, and Israel) with an emphasis on Jewish diversity and social justice, in an LGBT/queer-positive community.
2. A program that combines professional staff with an active corps of teen and adult members serving as teachers, mentors and role models – welcoming and valuing the skills and contributions of all members.
3. A welcoming of spirituality into the lives of all involved with Kadimah – adults, youth and children – through a rich experience of Shabbat, prayer and an active participation in the congregation's ritual life throughout the year, as well as through discussion and exploration of the meaning of God in our lives.
4. A strong emphasis on community building among children, their families and other congregants – deepening and enriching our evolving concepts of family.
5. A sustained commitment to experiential learning (learning through doing), and to strengthening the connections between synagogue, home and the diverse urban community around us.
6. A creative use of resources in maintaining a dynamic program.

In all of these ways, our education program will be a school that our entire congregation takes pride in and feels responsible for. It will be a formative experience of identity for our children, a school they will be proud to have been part of, and a place where they want to be.

## Red Bennett's Bar Mitzvah

On Saturday, November 15 (Parashat Vayera), Red Bennett will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah.

Red is a student at A.P. Giannini Middle School, where he enjoys playing trombone with the school's jazz band. He also enjoys skateboarding around his neighborhood with his two best friends and playing soccer with the Viking and PAL leagues. Once his bar

mitzvah is over, he plans to learn to play electric guitar from his father. His favorite type of music is punk rock, which he learned about from his mother, Naomi Szoke. With all this music in his life, Red is considering a career as a professional musician.

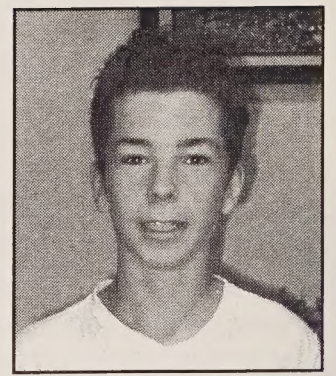
Red enjoyed preparing for his bar mitzvah with mentor Randy Weiss, particularly because "Randy uses humor to get you to do things" and "doesn't get pissed off when you don't do all your work." Randy also broke things down into manageable portions for Red, who said that, prior to preparing for his bar mitzvah, the biggest project he ever did was a book report.

He also praised Phyllis Mintzer who, he said, "is an amazing teacher who really helps you think things through."

For his mitzvah project, Red is interviewing his grandparents to learn more about "where I come from." He didn't really know anything about his family history before this and now feels that they were luckier than other people because they were able to survive the Shoah. He will transcribe the interviews and publish them to share with the rest of his family.

Red will celebrate his bar mitzvah with a party for his friends and family. He is especially excited that his uncle Danny is coming from Caesaria, Israel where he lives.

Mazel tov to Red and his family!



## New Members

The Membership Committee is pleased to announce that our congregation gained the following new members this month. A warm welcome to the most recent people to join our family:

**Anne Bluethenthal, Donna Rae Palmer and Mina Rae Ostron Bluethenthal**

**Douglas Carlson**

**Sasha Chandler**

**Andrea Cohen and Leigh Illion**

**Sue Greenberg and Shawna Nicole Blackman**

**Lisa Hamburger and Mary Silverstein, Sean Hamburger, Alisha and Adriel Silverstein**

**David Lasker**

**Glenn and Ryan London**

**Stefan Lynch**

**Angie Nueman**

**Shelli Rawlings-Fein**

**Julie, Laura and Arielle Rosenthal-Bauer**

**Anthony Serio**

**Luke Swank**

**Larry Wong**

**Natalie Zeituny**

We are grateful to see our congregation grow. It is up to all of us to help our new members feel welcome as they become active participants in our community.



# Pinat Yeladim Omishpachah

## Children and Family Corner

### Family Kabbalat Shabbat

**Friday, November 14, 6:15 pm**  
**With more Jewish story telling!**

Meet, eat, sing and celebrate Shabbat with CSZ families and then stay for Friday night services. Families with children of all ages are encouraged to come. Dinner is vegetarian potluck; please bring a dish to share. No RSVP required. Be a part of the *ruach* (spirit) of our community and invite friends and family to join you. Shabbat Shalom!

### Baby Chavurah

**Sunday, November 9, 10 am to noon**

Bring those under-twos out to play, sing and commune with like-minded babes and their parents. Join us for potluck brunch, playtime and socializing. This month we meet at the synagogue. Please bring your baby and a vegetarian dish. Older siblings are welcome, as are nonmembers. Baby Chavurah meets the second Sunday of each month.

### Tot Shabbat

**Saturday, November 15,**  
**10:30 - 11:30 am**

Come celebrate Shabbat with your tot. Bring your two to five year olds for singing, prayer, storytelling, crafts and family Jewish fun with Sandra Menachem, Early Childhood Education Specialist. Younger siblings and nonmembers are welcome.

### Giving Thanks for the High Holidays

Many people began the new year with a mitzvah by helping to make family and children's High Holiday programming a success. Thank you to Alan Gordon for coordinating Family Services, to our Kadimah classes for their service leading, especially Kitot Vav and Zayin, and to our teens, especially Alapai Kim-Michels and Julia Becker, for their continued leadership. Thank you to Joan Goldman for coordinating children's program door-sitters

and to all of the people who spent an hour keeping our children safe. Thank you to all of our childcare staff especially our pinch hitters Nora Downs, Gabe Press-Becker and Josh Levy. Thanks to Shelley Adler and Ilana Bernstein for leading our tot circle. Finally thank you to all of our Kadimah sukkah hosts: the Mintzers, the Dorf/Olsen family, the Prochovnick/Frantz family, the Pines/Schwartz family and the Ross/Trupin family. May the new year continue to bring us opportunities to do joyful mitzvot.

### CSZ Hosts Israeli Teens

Sha'ar Zahav was one of the final stops of a two-week educational exchange in the Bay Area for eighteen high school aged youth from northern Israel. On September 29, the teen participants of the sister program to the San Francisco Diller Fellows, a Jewish teen leadership program, came to learn about the role of the LGBT community in American Jewish life, as a part of their learning about the American Jewish community and Jewish pluralism.

CSZ member Randy Weiss, Educator Sue Bojdak and Avner Zohar of the Israel Center shared their experiences as LGBT Jews and discussed with the teens identity, secular and Jewish politics, comparative social norms, and family and cultural issues. CSZ member Marianne Balin, a Diller mom and host parent for one of the teens, presented the students with gifts to take home to their families. This group of teens returns to Israel with a greater appreciation for Jewish diversity and Jewish life in the diaspora.

### Kadimah Class Spotlight: Kitah Vav

One day last spring Kadimah student Gabe Edlin and his parents uncovered an old leather bound book with handwritten recipes that a family ancestor had brought to this country from Europe. The book had found its way into a trunk in the Edlin/Meyer family home and been forgotten. They were searching for a family artifact to share as a part of Kitah Vav's

Family History Project, when they made the discovery. From the book flowed many wonderful tales of Gabe's family history and the experiences of Jewish immigrants in America, which became part of an exchange of family stories during a Kitah Vav family education day. While not every student uncovered something as magical as the Edlin/Meyer's old recipe book, every student is uncovering more about his/her roots.

The two-year project, brought to Kitah Vav by member Marianne Balin and oral historian Susan "Perl" Perlman, is designed to help students better understand their own Jewish identities, an important element in the b'nei mitzvah journey, which is the heart of the Kitah Vav curriculum. Marianne and Perl volunteer their time monthly for Kitah Vav family history sessions, to which parents are always invited and sometimes obligated to come. The project will conclude with students creating artistic representations of their family history to be given as gifts to their parents on the occasion of their b'nei mitzvah ceremonies.

Kitah Vav is a sixth grade class and is the first year of a two-year focus on b'nei mitzvah preparation. In addition to family history, students deepen their study of text, begin to work their way through our 13 mitzvot program by doing individual, family and class mitzvot, explore Jewish identity issues and continue their study of Hebrew and prayer. Kitah Vav is taught this year by Kadimah veteran Jen Levinson.

There is NO KADIMAH on  
Wednesday, November 26 or  
Saturday, November 29.

Contact Sue Bojdak,  
Director of Family and  
Children's Education,  
(415/861-6932 x302 or  
educator@shaarzahav.org)  
for more information about any of  
these programs or to RSVP.



December Deadline: Monday, November 3, 5pm**Articles**

Please submit your articles as a Word attachment via email to: [newsletter@shaarzahav.org](mailto:newsletter@shaarzahav.org). *No late submissions will be accepted.* To place a display ad, contact Roslyn Fuerman (510/526-1209 or [froslyn@earthlink.net](mailto:froslyn@earthlink.net)). To place a classified ad, call the office.

**Advertising**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<i>Congregational Advance</i> <b>6:30 pm</b> Ma'ariv Service	<b>6:30 pm</b> Ma'ariv Service <b>7 pm</b> Group for Non-Biological Parents	<b>6:30 pm</b> Ma'ariv Service <b>7 pm</b> The Queer Torah Study Project <b>7:30 pm</b> Torah Trope	<b>4 pm</b> Midweek Kadimah <b>6:30 pm</b> Ma'ariv Service <b>7 pm</b> Tales of the Sages	<b>6:30 pm</b> Ma'ariv Service	<b>8:15 pm</b> Shabbat Service with Shalom Bayit Domestic Violence Focus led by Larry Wexler and Lyssa Friedman	<i>Lech Lecha: Gen. 12:1-17:27</i> <b>9 am</b> Torah Study <b>9:30 am</b> Kadimah <b>10 am</b> Shabbat Services led by Ron Edelman
	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
						<b>1</b> <i>Heshvan 6</i>
						<i>Congregational Advance</i> <i>Noah: Gen. 6:9-11:32</i> <b>9 am</b> Torah Study <b>9:30 am</b> Kadimah <b>10 am</b> Shabbat Services led by Alan Gordon and Steve Weitz



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
10 am Baby Chavurah 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service	6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 7 pm Group for Non-Biological Parents	<i>Veteran's Day</i> 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 7 pm The Queer Torah Study Project 7:30 pm Torah Trope	4 pm Midweek Kadimah 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 7 pm Tales of the Sages	6:30 pm Va'ad meeting 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 7 pm Intro to Judaism	6:15 pm Family Shabbat Dinner 7:30 pm Shabbat Service led by Rabbi Angel, Tiela Chalmers and Aaron Goldman Maclachlan	<i>Veyero:</i> <i>Gen. 18:1-22:24</i> 9 am Torah Study 9:30 am Kadimah 10 am Red Bennett's Bar Mitzvah 10 am Shabbat Services led by Randy Weiss 10:30 am Tot Shabbat
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service	6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 7 pm Group for Non-Biological Parents	6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 7 pm The Queer Torah Study Project 7:30 pm Torah Trope	4 pm Midweek Kadimah 5 pm Most Holy Redeemer dinner 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service	6:30 pm Ritual Committee 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 7 pm Intro to Judaism	Noon Talmud for Busy People (off-site) 6 pm Intro to Judaism 7:30 pm Shabbat Services led by Kabbalat Shabbat Ensemble 7:30 pm Baby Naming of Gabriel Oliver-Polsky	<i>Chaye Sarah:</i> <i>Gen. 23:1-25:18</i> 9 am Torah Study 9:30 am Kadimah 10 am Baby Namings of Kai and Joshua Bernard-Pearl 10 am Kadimah-led Shabbat Services
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
28	29	30	<i>Kislev 1</i>	2	3	4
6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service	6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service	6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 7 pm The Queer Torah Study Project	6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service	<i>Thanksgiving</i> Office closed	Office closed 7:30 pm Shabbat Services led by Rachel Maclachlan	<i>Toledot:</i> <i>Gen. 25:19-28:9</i> 9 am Torah Study 10 am Shabbat Services led by Tiela Chalmers
30						
4						
6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service						





## From the Jewish Toolkit

### Blessing Your Way Through the Day

The Jewish Tool Kit was recently reminded by her Aunt Yente that saying *brachot* – blessings – is one of the most fundamental aspects of Jewish theology and practice.

Brachot fall into three categories. *Birkot HaMitzvot* (blessings of the commandments) are said before performing a mitzvah, like lighting Shabbat candles. These blessings all take the form of “Blessed are You God, Sovereign of the Universe, who has sanctified us with commandments and commanded us to [insert mitzvah].” *Birkot HaNehenin* (blessings of enjoyment) are said before enjoying food, drink or fragrance, like the *HaMotzi* before eating bread. Finally, *Birkot Hoda'ah* (blessings of thanks) are blessings of praise, gratitude or petition said for specific events or phenomena, like the well-known *Shehechyanu* blessing said at new or special occasions. Most of the blessings of enjoyment and praise take the form “Blessed are You God, Sovereign of the Universe [Who is/does/makes/causes...].”

Jewish blessings usually make intuitive sense; upon hearing very good news, one says the blessing “Blessed are You ... Who is good and does good.” But some are tougher to figure out: upon hearing tragic news one says “Blessed is God, *Dayan HaEmet* – the true judge.” This doesn’t quite jive with the colloquial sense of “blessing”; surely we’re not saying “Thank God my house burned down!” With this blessing we really see the true nature of brachot (in the Jewish Tool Kit’s humble opinion, anyway). Far more than just thanks or praise, brachot are about *acknowledgment* – about being aware of the Divine presence in every aspect of our lives, from landmark events to the most mundane actions we perform everyday.

There is even a blessing for using the bathroom (this one appears out of context on page 1:3 of CSZ’s Shabbat morning siddur, but it’s so beautiful that the JTK doesn’t mind). The Talmud says that one who enjoys the pleasures of this world without making a blessing is a thief. And to discourage thieving behavior, the Talmud encourages us to strive to say at least 100 blessings a day. So, here are a few interesting ones you might not have heard about:

On smelling fragrant edible fruits or nuts:

“... *HaNotein rayach tov ba-perot*” (... Who puts a good aroma into fruits).

On seeing a rainbow:

“... *Zocher habrit, v’ne-eman biv’rito, v’kayam b’ma-a-mar*” (... Who remembers the covenant and fulfills Your word).

On seeing differently-formed people:

“... *m’shaneh ha-briyot*” (... Who varies creatures).

On experiencing an earthquake or seeing tall mountains or shooting stars:

“... *Oseh ma’aseh b’rayshit*” (... Who makes the work of creation).

On seeing a beautiful sight in nature:

“... *she-kachah lo b’olamo*” (... Who has such in the world).

Comments about the Jewish Tool Kit can be sent to [JewishToolKit@attglobal.net](mailto:JewishToolKit@attglobal.net).

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## Rabbi Angel's Recommended Readings

*The Book of Blessings*  
by Marcia Falk.  
Beacon Press.



*The Book of Jewish Sacred Practices: CLAL's Guide to Everyday & Holiday Rituals & Blessings*, Irwin Kula and Vanessa Ochs, editors.  
Jewish Lights.

*The Art of the Blessing the Day: Poems with a Jewish Theme* by Marge Piercy.  
Knopf.

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# Social Action Connection

by Susan Lubeck

## Shabbat Shalom Bayit

November 7, 8:15 pm

This Shabbat service will have a special shalom bayit (peace in the house) theme. Increase your awareness about domestic violence and your ability to provide support to those in need.

## "It Is No Dream" Movie and Havdalah

December 13, 7 pm

Join us for this special screening of a documentary from the Jewish Film Festival profiling Israeli peace activism. Facilitated discussion to follow. For more information, contact Melanie (415/861-6932 or mkushnir@shaarzahav.org).

## Dinner with Homeless Neighbors

Every Wednesday

You can support and connect with homeless San Franciscans. Join us at Most Holy Redeemer in the Castro. Show up any time between 3 and 9 pm on Wednesdays, join a dedicated and inspiring community of people and make connections with homeless neighbors. On arrival, look for CSZ member Larry Wong. For more information, contact AJ Turpen Fried (ajsparkles@mac.com).

## Project Open Hand Volunteer Relief

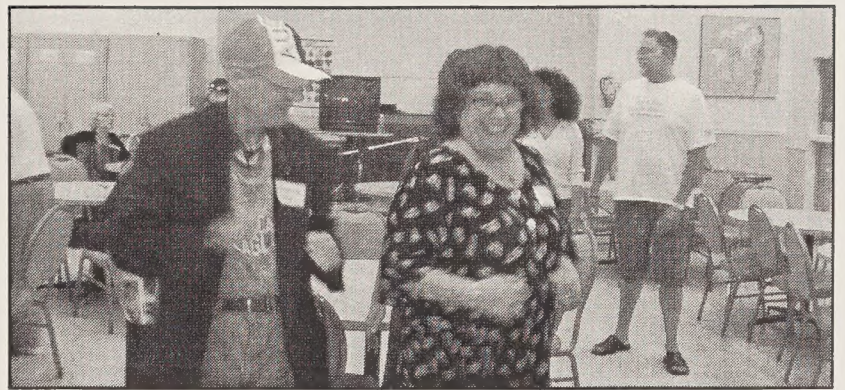
Each year CSZ members relieve regular Open Hand volunteers over Christmas, preparing and delivering meals to people with HIV and AIDS. Please fill out the enclosed form indicating your desire to volunteer and turn it into the office. Allan Berenstein (sfdaytimer@aol.com) and Laura Lowe are co-organizing this year's effort.

## Tenderloin Lunch

This year's pre-High Holiday Tenderloin Lunch again ran smoothly and was enjoyed by the seniors who participated (see pictures). CSZers turned out in force to help. Kudos to Allan Berenstein, who organized it and brought along two of his brothers, to Sandy O'Neill, who led the service and to volunteers Avraham Giannini, Lisa Szer, Alan Foss and Florence Nacamulli.



Sandy O'Neill and Allan Berenstein.



A lunch participant enjoys a laugh with Florence Nacamulli.



Florence Nacamulli, Avraham Giannini, Alan Foss and Lisa Szer.

## Honduras Recovery Project with the American Jewish World Service

Interested in helping organize a mind- and heart-opening trip to Honduras to help with health care and flood recovery? As of now we have two members interested in working on this, but a point person is needed to help us gauge interest and take it from there. For more information, contact Susan (susanlubeck@aol.com).

## Thank you!

At our Shabbat Sukkat Shalom service, on October 10, we honored Craig Persiko, outgoing Social Action Committee co-chair, and all the volunteers who helped organize tikkun olam efforts in the last year or for 5764: Marianne Balin, Red Bennett, Allan Berenstein, Randy Blaustein, Prudence Carter, Jay Davidson, Lele and Rachel Field, Jim Frazin, Sarita Groisser, Alan Karras, Patricia Lin, Laura Lowe, Steve Mazer, Susan Mizner, Jeff Piade, Ora Prochovnick, Sharyn Saslasky, Michael Schaffer, Naomi Szoke, Ina Turpen Fried, Richard Weiner, Lonnie Weiss and Larry Wong.

Thanks to Ora Prochovnick and Joe Hample for leading this special service and to Patrick Mulcahey, founder of the Wednesday dinners at Most Holy Redeemer parish, for his very inspiring sermon.

Finally, a special thank you to Craig Persiko. Craig served as co-chair with AJ and me for almost two years. His clear thinking, commitment to social justice and calm and caring presence made him a delight to work with. In addition to contributing to all of our planning and communications work, Craig provided leadership in establishing our relationship with Most Holy Redeemer homeless dinners, organizing panels on Islam which we hosted in the wake of the September 11 attacks and getting us involved in environmental projects. Congratulations to Craig and his partner Geoff Benjamin on the arrival of Serafina Persiko Benjamin.



# Sinai Memorial Chapel: What It's All About

*Former CSZ presidents Irene Ogus and Richard Inlander have each become members of the Board of Directors of Sinai Memorial Chapel. In this article they share some facts and ideas about this unique organization. Irene and Richard are two of the founders of the Congregation Sha'ar Zahav cemetery, along with the third founder Paul Cohen.*

Jewish communities traditionally create a burial society, known as a *Chevra Kadisha*, which means *Holy Society*. San Francisco's Sinai Memorial Chapel-Chevra Kadisha, founded in 1901, assures that any indigent Jew can receive a proper Jewish burial at no cost. Sinai has the additional purposes of giving financial support to Jewish religious and educational organizations and supporting Jewish philanthropic organizations. In order to obtain funds for these purposes, Sinai maintains a memorial chapel, conducts funerals and furnishes cemetery plots for compensation, all in keeping with Jewish faith and practice. Thus, each of us is likely to come in contact with Sinai in at least two ways – in utilizing its funeral and burial services and in benefiting, perhaps without realizing it, from Sinai's financial support of CSZ or of one of more than one hundred synagogues and Jewish organizations in Northern California.

The Sinai Board of Directors has 25 very active and dedicated women and men who are drawn from every segment of the Bay Area Jewish community. Sinai has acquired property for its offices, chapels and cemetery and has built and managed healthy financial reserves. Sinai has expanded to the East Bay, where it maintains an office in Lafayette and it will soon open an office and chapel to serve the San Francisco Peninsula communities.

Last year, Sinai donations totaled \$440,000. The varied recipients included the Holocaust Oral History Project, the Jewish Women's Chorus, Bereavement Camp and numerous Jewish schools and camps. Congregation Sha'ar Zahav has received \$5,000 (the maximum given to any synagogue) for our children's education programs this year.

Sinai is one of only two Jewish burial societies in the country that maintain the nonprofit tradition. Sinai derives its income from the

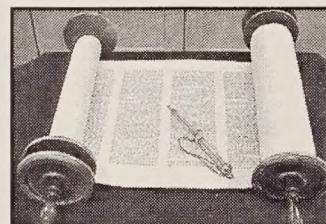
sale of funeral and burial services and plots in its cemetery, Eternal Home, in Colma. Sinai provides the option of arranging a funeral or burial pre-need, if you and your family so desire. Funeral and burial arrangements can be with both Sinai and Hills of Eternity. Members who choose a funeral service at Sinai choose to be buried in our own CSZ cemetery at Hills of Eternity.

In addition to assisting families at the time of a death, Sinai now offers the Next Steps program, which provides, at no charge, bereavement counseling to all families who have used Sinai's services. Now in its third year, this outstanding and compassionate program has provided assistance to dozens of grieving families.

It is said that seeing to the burial of the dead is the greatest mitzvah, because it is a favor that can never be repaid. We are available to discuss any matters concerning our own Congregation Sha'ar Zahav Cemetery or Sinai Memorial Chapel.

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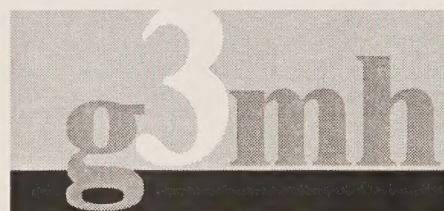
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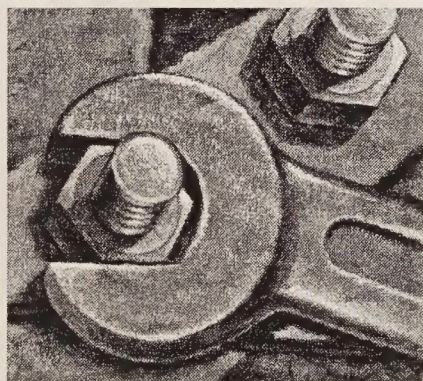
Then join the Newsletter Committee. We are always looking for people with writing or editing skills who want to know everything that's going on in the synagogue.

For more information, contact Karen Schiller (kschiller@igc.org)

## Toiletry Collection

Congregation Sha'ar Zahav has an ongoing toiletry collection which we donate to homeless shelters. Please drop off all of your unused toiletries in the big red bin next to the information table outside the oneg room; hotel-size items are especially welcome. Our toiletry collection has benefited many local community agencies and is an easy way to do a mitzvah!

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- in honor of Geoff Benjamin and

Craig Persiko on the arrival of  
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- in memory of Levi Cohen.

- in honor of Richard Inlander on the  
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- in honor of Daryl Goldman and  
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- in memory of Marvin W. Sinkoff.

**Gilda and Melvin Winiker**

- in prayer for Richard Mann.

**Ami Zusman**

- in honor of Rabbi Angel's adoption  
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**Eva Zysman**

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## *Rabbi's Discretionary Fund*

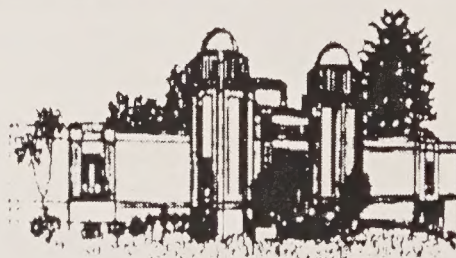
**Miriam Trentman and Robert Morelli**

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**Betty Wexler.**

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Thank you to the Chesir-Stein Music Fund for making the entertainment at Simchat Torah possible.



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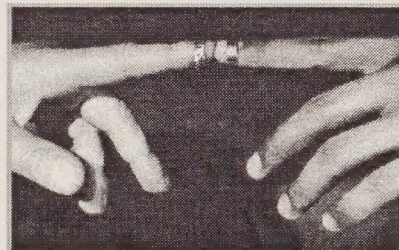
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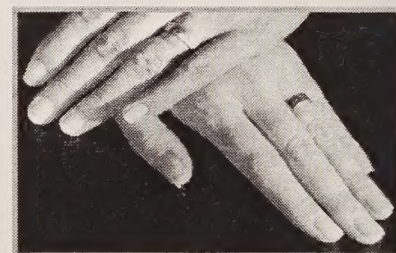
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## Birthdays



- 1 Joss Eldredge
- Steven Polsky
- Donna Blow
- 3 Adrienne Hornby
- 4 Noah Goldstein
- 5 Steve Marshall
- 5 Mara Shuster-Lefkowitz
- 5 Rabbi Eric Weiss
- 6 Gary Gartner
- 6 Alessio Franko
- 6 Jerrold Polansky
- 7 Aaron Farmer
- 7 Rachel Kliegman
- 8 Tova Green
- 8 William Garcia
- 9 Shmulik Fishman
- 9 Martha Rosett
- 9 Brad Post
- 10 Mary Silverstein
- 10 Sean Martin-Hamburger
- 10 Elijah Lezell Jatovsky
- 11 Zachary Weber Fineberg
- 11 Joshua Katz
- 11 Bruce Kapsack
- 11 Patricia Lin
- 12 Seth Skolnick
- Michael Klain-Chavez
- 12 Richard Weiner
- 12 Gina Surber
- 13 Zachary Barnes Miller
- 13 Cohen Stein
- 14 Ken Repp
- 15 Manny Fishman
- 16 Ruth Rainero
- 16 Jason Baskin
- 17 Sari McConnell
- 17 Serra Hagedorn
- 20 Ali Cannon
- 20 Alan Gordon
- 22 Lila Schulman
- 22 Anna Stuart-Friedman
- 23 Benjamin Gustavson-Scharf
- 24 Justyn Haveson-Lezin
- 24 Ellie Cohen
- 24 Alexis Lezin
- 24 Gideon Bennett
- 25 Julia Becker
- 26 Nancy Kates
- 26 Carlos Alonso
- 28 Judy Schwartz
- Beatrice Lieberman
- 28 Michael McConnell
- 29 Harold Podgur
- 29 David Rosenzweig

## Anniversaries



- 6 James Edlin and Eve Meyer
- 7 Judith Holiber and Kimberly Warsaw
- 8 Michael Bettinger and Robert Goldstein
- 11 Terry Fletcher and Glen Hauer
- 13 Virginia Donohue and Mark Klaiman
- 14 Anne Bluethenthal and Donna Rae Palmer
- 17 Lisa Katz and Sharon Heath
- 17 Elizabeth and Michael Schaffer
- 24 Ann Daniels and Jonathan Zingman
- 29 Rachel Maclachlan and Nancy Silverrod

## Oneg, Flower and Childcare Sponsorships



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Bimah flowers were sponsored by **Daryl Goldman and Jeanette Nichols** in honor of their family and friends.  
Oneg was sponsored by **Daryl Goldman and Jeanette Nichols** in celebration of their aufruf.

9/12

Bimah flowers were sponsored by **Steve Mazer, Beth Sousa and friends** in honor of Andrea Guerra's welcome into the covenant.  
Oneg was sponsored by **Steve Mazer, Beth Sousa and friends** in honor of Andrea Guerra's welcome into the covenant.

9/13

Oneg was sponsored by **Ellen Berger** in memory of her brother, Harvey Berger.

9/19

Bimah flowers was sponsored by **Lauren Kim and Alan Michaels** in celebration of their 15th anniversary.  
Oneg was sponsored by **Lisa Szer** in honor of the Kabbalat Shabbat Ensemble.

**Rosh Hashannah**

Bimah flowers were sponsored by **Laura Lowe** in loving memory of her uncle, Norton Pintchuk.  
Oneg was sponsored by **Walter Leiss**.  
**Yom Kippur**  
Bimah flowers were sponsored in memory of Rose Kliman Byer.  
Oneg was sponsored by **Walter Leiss**.

## Naches



- Richard Brand and Alan Keith** on the purchase of their new home in Oakland.
- Daryl Goldman and Jeanette Nichols** on the occasion of their wedding.
- Andrea Guerra** on her welcome into the covenant.
- Patricia Lin** who was invited to interview candidates for the Rhodes and Marshall scholarships applying from Stanford University.
- Dan Bellm** who was the San Francisco Public Library's October Featured Poet: Check out [www.sfpl.org/news/reflections.htm](http://www.sfpl.org/news/reflections.htm) to read his featured poem.
- Marty Rawlings and Shelli Fein** on the occasion of their aufruf.
- Susan Tubbesing and Sarah Nathe** on the birth of their granddaughter Hannah Claire. Their daughter Laura, son-in-law Brian and granddaughter Hanna Claire are doing just fine.

## Yahrzeits

- 3 Forrest Kincade
- 11 Sidney Rosenthal
- 11 Bruce Apter
- 12 Richard D. Wright
- 16 Chuck Norton
- 22 Tristano Palermino

## Condolences

- Susan Schwartz**, on the death of her client and friend, Beverly Ramsay.
- Ami Zusman**, on the death of her uncle, Levi Cohen.
- Terry Fletcher**, on the death of her aunt-in-law, Melanie Reilley.
- Rachel Timoner**, on the death of her cousin, Rosaleen Condon.
- Scott Rutherford**, on the death of his father, John Rutherford.
- Alan Gordon**, on the death of his friend, Rudy Menen.
- Larry Best**, on the death of his cousin, Laura Golotko.
- Aimee Durfee**, on the death of her cousin, Antoinette Bilicich.





# Synagogue Information

## Congregation Sha'ar Zahav

290 Dolores Street  
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### Interim Executive Director

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### Program Director

Melanie Kushnir (x305)  
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### Director of Children's and Family Education

Sue Bojdak (x302)  
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### Kadimah Head Teacher

Phyllis Mintzer

### Administrative Assistant

Steven Angelides (x304)  
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### Rabbi's Assistant

Gabby Volodarsky (x310)  
• [abby@shaarzahav.org](mailto:abby@shaarzahav.org)

## Officers

President, Arthur Slepian  
(415/452-9143)  
[cszpres@pacbell.net](mailto:cszpres@pacbell.net)  
Vice President, Rose Katz  
Vice President, Alex Ingersoll  
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## Va'ad Members

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Marianne Balin  
Barbara Cymrot  
Ron Edelman  
Tony Harris  
Leslie Kane  
Gail Ludwig  
Ron Miguel  
Rachel Timoner  
Marc Wernick

Members wishing to contact any Va'ad member or committee chair are invited to obtain his or her number from the synagogue office.

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## Committee Chairs

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*Baby Chavurah*, by committee  
*Bequests and Donations*, open  
*Bikkur Cholim*, open  
*Book Group*, Mark Mackler  
*Building and Grounds*, Beth Sousa  
*Bylaws*, open  
*Children's Education Board*, Howard Herman  
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**Bikkur Cholim:** If you or a friend who is a member of Sha'ar Zahav is ill in the hospital or at home, and would like to have a member of the Bikkur Cholim Committee call or visit, please notify the synagogue office.

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